



Kent A. Rader

405-209-3273

kent@kentraderspeaks.com



The Safe Haven of Laughter

I'm performing in Nebraska earlier this year and read a story about Nebraska's "Safe Haven Law". The law says parents can drop their child off at any Nebraska hospital to be put into foster care, no questions asked. Every state in the country has one of these for children up to a year old, but, Nebraska's law is unique because it is for children up to 18 years old. Now Nebraska hospitals are inundated with parents dropping off their rebellious teenagers.

And you don't even have to be from Nebraska to do it. One woman from Connecticut dropped off her 15-year-old son. Can you imagine how that went down?

"Mom, where we going on vacation?"

"Omaha!"

Children are exasperating, but

a reward awaits every parent-grandchildren. Our friend, Jan McInnis, is staying at our house when our grandson, Kai, calls us on Skype. Jan says Twyla and I transform from normal human beings into grandparents faster than Peter Parker transforms into Spiderman.

Kai loves Spiderman and when he visits we have to play Spiderman with him, always being one of the bad guys, like Sandman, Venom, Rhino, etc. The last time he was at our house, Twyla tapes him to the refrigerator with packing tape so he can bust out like Spiderman. He and I are eating lunch at the Chick-fil-A the next day when he asks, "Papa Kent, when we get home are you going to tape me to the refrigerator?"

Explain that to the lady from DHS.

That was when Twyla volunteered us to watch him for a week. I tell her, "Twyla, we're not capable of watching a three-year-old for a week."

She goes, "What are you talking about, we raised two kids."

"I know, but we were half our age."

Actually, during that visit I came up with a calculation to help

determine if you can watch a child. Your age ÷ Child's age = How much sleep you'll need at night. That's why 24-year-olds can have three-year-old children and still function in society. Twenty-four divided by three is eight, thus, they only need eight hours sleep. Twyla and I are in our 50s. Fifty divided by three is 16, so we need 16 hours sleep at night. My mom watched him one day because I dropped myself off at a Nebraska hospital. Mom is 77, she watched him on Wednesday, she didn't wake up until Friday.

When he's at our house we keep water in the bathtub because he likes sitting next to the tub playing with his boats. The day Mom watches him, I come home and she says, "When he played with his boats, I drained the water and ran fresh, warm water because I didn't want his little fingers to get cold."

It's hard to believe this is the same woman who made me bathe in my brother, Michael's, dirty bath water. And when I'd protest, she'd say, "Oh, it's not that dirty."

"It looks like the Gulf of Mexico. There's an oil slick, dead fish, and what's that pelican doing here?"

Kai has flannel, onesie jammies he wears at our house because he likes running and sliding on our hardwood floors. When I'm chasing him, he slides under our bed, and comes out the other side covered in dust bunnies and cat hair. I'm thinking, "That works better than a Swiffer."

So all day, I am playing with him, "Hey, Kai, I saw the Sandman go under Aunt Maggie's bed, get under there and catch him. No, he's up there in the corner."

Twyla comes home from school observing, "My, my, my. The floors look nice."

I go, "Yeah, and I washed Kai's jammies too."

If there were a drinking game where you take a shot every time you hear the word "why"- when this boy is around, you'd be passed out on the sofa by the end of *Dora the Explorer*.

"Where's Mama Twyla?"

"She's at school."

"Why?"

"Because we need the money."

"Why?"

"Because Aunt Maggie's in grad school."

"Why?"

"Because she can't find a job in this economy."

"Why?"

"Because people bought houses they couldn't afford."

"Why?"

All of a sudden a question regarding Twyla's location turns into a ten-minute dissertation on Keynesian Economics.

We're in England this summer, riding the Tube with a grandfather and his granddaughter. Twyla and I laughed listening to this child incessantly asking "Why" until we saw the greatest display of grandparenting ever. After the third "Why?" the grandfather asks, "Sweetie, would you like some M&M's?"

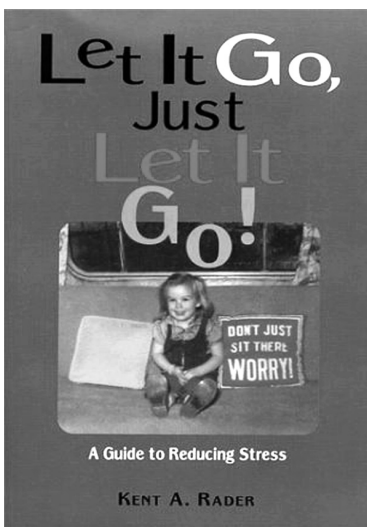
Although that's probably why their teeth are so bad, I think it's brilliant.

Regardless of our nationality, the common language we share is laughter. We all seem to be born with the capacity to laugh and it is a natural defense against the destructiveness of stress, heartache, and depression. When we laugh, our immune system is strengthened, making us less susceptible to illness and physically healthier.

With summer coming to a close and the dreary days of winter and parental demands of another school year upon us, remember to look for those situations that make you laugh. It is the perfect prescription against children driving you crazy and the hospitals of Nebraska will thank you.



I wish you continued success and always remember the immortal words of Gilda Radner: "Laughter matters."



*Known as the world's cleanest comedian and speaker, Kent Rader helps people learn and experience how laughter matters in reducing stress. A reformed accountant, Kent has written the stress reduction book titled **Let It Go, Just Let It Go** available at Amazon.com and featured in the Country Inns and Suites Read It And Return Program in 200 hotels. Kent and Jan McInnis are performing *The Baby Boomer Comedy Show* in theaters throughout the country. (www.babyboomercomedyshow.com) One audience member observed, "You are a wonderful reminder that our human nature provides unlimited opportunities to laugh, share, and defuse the stresses of our lives in a way that is neither offensive nor exclusionary". For information or a free DVD, please contact Kent at 405-209-3273 or email kent@kentraderspeaks.com.*



Jan McInnis

1-800-492-9394
Jan@TheWorkLady.com

Cesar Says

I'm a huge fan of the TV Show *Dog Whisperer*. My friends think it's funny because I don't have a dog; I have 2 cats. I travel too much for a dog, but I once had a cat named Rover. You can't have a *Cat Whisperer* show because every episode would be the same "and now this week, tune in as the *Cat Whisperer* stops the cat from clawing the furniture." People would stop watching after the third week AND the cats wouldn't stop clawing the furniture anyway. But the *Dog Whisperer* is cool. I refused to watch it for years because I thought it was about some guy translating the dog's barking into English – I live in Los Angeles, so someone here probably does that. No, the show is about using your *energy* to change the bad behavior of your dog so that the dog does what you want it to do. It really works.

Cesar Millan (The Dog Whisperer) has addressed

every single kind of crazy dog... aggressive, anxious, timid, nervous, spinning in circles, chewing lawn mowers, eating other family pets...and by his calm, assertive energy alone, he transforms these animals into dogs that even a cat person would adopt. He'll walk into a cage with an attack dog and soon he's rollerblading with the dog down the sidewalk in complete control. It's amazing to see—not only because he still has all ten fingers and both arms, but also that he does it in minutes. Cesar illustrates in a dramatic way what he preaches to the dog owners: that you gain control only with energy, not tension, and that your emotions inside affect your energy outside, which in turn affects pets (and people) around you. If you're nervous, scared, or anxious inside, then that's the type of dog you'll create. It's all about the energy.

I was at a Mexican restaurant with my brother, his wife and their three boys, when my 12-year-old nephew, Patrick, ordered the "Fiesta Platter" (which was the size of Mexico – it was HUGE! I mean a LOT of food)! Later when the check came, I grabbed it. My brother made a dive for

it and we began that check tussle thing (in earnest—not like when you're pretending to reach for it but you're really hoping the other person beats you to it). After a couple minutes of tension and a hard-fought battle with my brother, Patrick pointed to his plate and blurted out "Dad, let her have it. . . we don't know how much this thing cost!" Great laughter, tension relieved, and I got the check. The moral of the story, aside from 'dinner is on me', is that humor works, like Cesar's calm assertiveness, to change the energy. By using humor, we change negative/stressful/tense energy into a positive force, which in turn allows us to influence the people and our environment so that we are in control.

Changing your energy to change a behavior is also cheaper than other remedies. I saw a TV show in which a woman had a dog with obsessive-compulsive behavior. The dog had a stick and he'd run around the backyard and bury, unbury it, bury, unbury it, etc. She finally put the dog on Prozac! It was \$75 a month!

I'd throw away the stick.

When you change the energy of a tense situation through humor, you reap many personal benefits too (check out Kent Rader's book *Let it Go, Just Let It Go* for more info). One client told me that her research on laughter even shows that it's the only emotion you can experience in which you *can't* multi-task! She said you can cry and still write a letter blasting someone who just broke up with you, but you can't laugh and write that same letter. I asked her "What about laughing so hard that you wet your pants – isn't that multi-

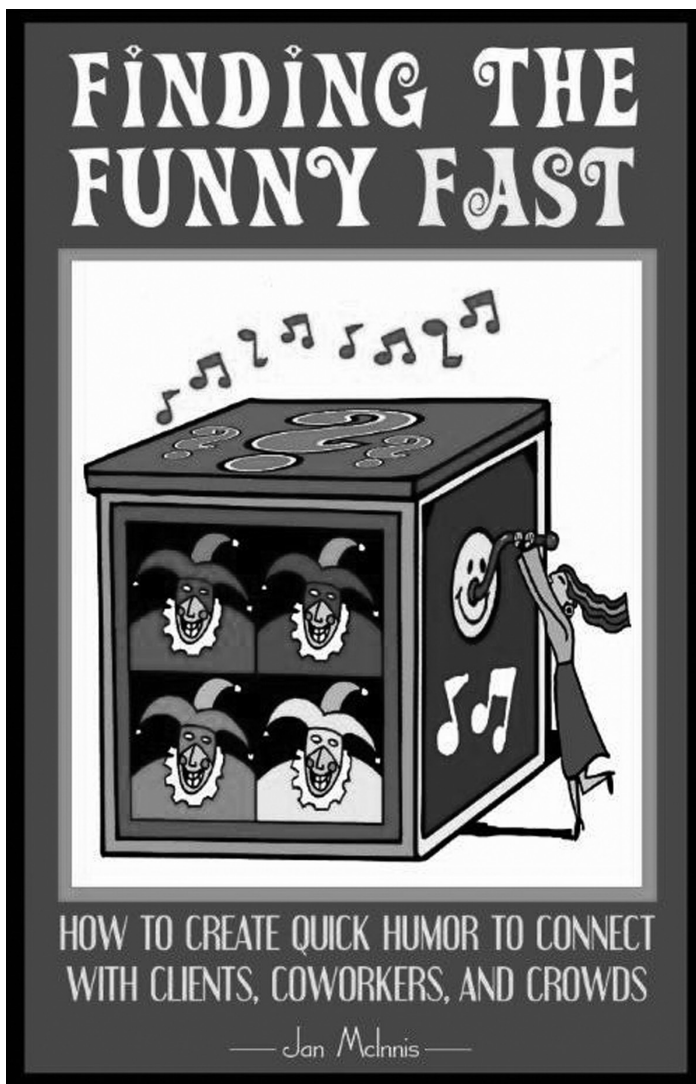
tasking?" Turns out wetting your pants is not a cognitive task, so that's still an option.

The power of laughter is gaining in popularity and taking different forms. "Laughter yoga" is now sweeping the country. I tried regular yoga once but I couldn't do it because I've got a birth defect, I was born with a SPINE (If you've tried yoga, you know what I'm talking about). Laughter yoga is a little less pretzel-like: people sit around and laugh at nothing, sort of like a guy watching *The Three*

Stooges. People tell me it works, so maybe I can get into yoga!

One happy client from the *Dog Whisperer* show was thrilled after Cesar got her dog to stop attacking her boyfriend. She summed it up perfectly by saying that changing your energy is a simple concept but it's not easily executed. The same goes for humor, sort of humor is a simple concept – but it is EASY to execute. We just forget we have it as a tool.

Jan



Jan McInnis is a comedian and professional speaker who has shared her customized humor keynotes "Finding the Funny in Change," "Finding the Funny in Communications" and "Cubicle Comedy" with thousands of associations and corporations. She is also the author of "Finding the Funny FAST," and she was featured in the Wall Street Journal and the Washington Post for her clean humor. Jan and Kent Rader are performing The Baby Boomer Comedy Show in theaters around the country (www.babyboomercomedyshow.com). From the meeting planner for Pinnacle Health's conference: "I simply can't remember when I have laughed so hard for so long. We were delighted the way you drew the audience in by using the events of the weekend and added your unique brand of humor to them."

Jan can be reached at Jan@TheWorkLady.com or 1-800-492-9394.